Reducing Edible Oil Imports

2078. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether edible oil imports are projected to hit well over the 41 per cent mark which reached in 2001-2002;

(b) whether edible oil imports is likely to rise more than the last year;

(c) if so, the total edible oil imports made during the last year;

(d) to what extent it will be more during the current year;

(e) whether the Ministry had opposed to reduction of duty on imported palm oil and palmolein by the Finance Ministry; and

(f) by when the efforts would be made to see that the production of edible oil in the country is improved, so that imports are reduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) The import of edible oils during 2001-02 was 43.2 lakh metric tonnes and during 2002-03, about 42.66 lakh metric tonnes. There are no restriction on import other than the applicable rate of custom duty. The gap between the domestic demand and domestic production of edible oils is met by imports. Thus, the quantum of import shall depend on domestic demand, domestic production and international prices of edible oils.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) The Government had set up a Technology Mission on Oilseeds in 1986 to increase the production and productivity of oilseeds and to reduce the import of edible oils. The Mission has launched a Centrally Sponsored Oilseeds Production Programme (OPP) in the country. Under the scheme financial assistance is provided on various inputs like production and distribution of seeds, distribution of seed minikits, distribution of improved farm implements, sprinkler sets, rhyzobium culture and micro nutrients etc. In order to disseminate the production technology amongst the farmers frontline demonstrations are organized by the I.C.A.R. and block demonstrations are organized by the State Deptt. of Agriculture.

In case the weather conditions remain favourable during the coming years, the production of oilseeds is likely to increase from the present level which will reduce import of edible oils.

Formulating National Livestock Policy

2079. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether alarmed at the decline in fund allocation for animal husbandry and fishery, the Centre and the States have favoured quick formulation of a National Livestock Policy to step up investment, check cheap imports and protect farmers' interests under WTO regime;

(b) if so, whether the State Ministers' Conference on animal husbandry was held in February, 2003;

(c) if so what were the main points discussed; and

(d) what were the decisions taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) Government of India organized a State Ministers' Conference on Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries on 3rd February, 2003. The Conference *inter alia* focused on enhancing the investment in the animal husbandry sector, genetic improvement of livestock, extension of Animal Health Services, regulation of inter-State transportation of diseased animals, provision of milk and milk products under the mid-day meal programme, promotion of in-land water aquaculture and deep sea fishing. The Conference also *inter alia* discussed the Draft National Livestock Policy and recommended the need for improving the quality of livestock and livestock products to world standards.

Drought Relief in Rajasthan Through NGOs

2080. SHRI AIMADUDIN AHMAD KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether large number of voluntary organizations and other NGOs from foreign countries had come to Rajasthan recently for the distribution of drought relief to BPL families;